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HC RAPS PMO FOR ONE-PAGE REPLY ON PM-CARES FUND

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday took strong exception to the Centre's short reply and directed it to file a detailed one

ASKS GOVT TO FILE EXTENSIVE REPLY IN 4 WEEKS

Observing that the issue concerning the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund is "not so simple" the high court directed the Centre to file an extensive reply within four weeks. The bench was hearing a petition seeking a court order to declare it as a 'State' under the Constitution to ensure transparency

MATTER LIKELY TO REACH SUPREME COURT

- Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad that a detailed reply was already filed in a similar petition
- The bench said the matter "will certainly travel to the apex court" so all aspects have to be dealt with before giving an order

₹10,990.17 cr

TOTAL CORPUS OF PM CARES FUND AS OF 2020-21, UP FROM ₹3,076.62 IN 2019-20

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Fierce or not? House emblem triggers debate

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

DO the lions in the Lion Capital atop the new Parliament building look ferocious compared to the original conceived by Emperor Ashoka? Activists and Opposition politicians feel they do while the government claims it's a replica of the one at Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh and the anger seen on the face of the lions is because of its scaling and angle of visibility.

"Modi Ji, please observe the face of the Lion, whether it is representing the statue of Great Sarnath or a distorted version of GIR lion. Please check it and if it needs, mend the same," tweeted Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha.

TMC leader Mahua Moitra tweetied the old and new pictures to show the contrast.

"This is Modi's new India!" tweeted noted lawyer Prashant Bhushan who also shared the old and new emblems.

Clarifying the reason for the change in lions' expression, Union minister Hardeep Puri tweeted, "The original #Sarnath #Emblem is 1.6 mtr high whereas the emblem on the top of the #NewParliamentBuilding is huge at 6.5 mtrs height." He added, "If one looks at the Sarnath emblem from below it would look as calm or angry as the one being discussed."

This is the second controversy involving the emblem. On Monday, the Opposition had questioned the constitutional propriety of PM Modi's unveiling it with Hindu rituals.

Two views

The Centre says the original Lion Capital placed at Sarnath, UP is at ground level while the new emblem is at a height of 33 m from the ground, hence the difference in appearance

The Lion Capital of Asoka at Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh

The Lion Capital atop the new Parliament building

67 Israeli drones on deal street

CHANDAN NANDY @ New Delhi

THE Pegasus spyware controversy notwithstanding, an Israeli state-owned defence company is close to winning an Indian Ministry of Defence contract to supply 67 surveillance drones to the Army that will likely be deployed along the Indo-Pak border and parts of the Line of Control (LoC).

According to sources, Israeli Aerospace Industries may clinch the $3 billion deal despite competition from a US-based company. Sources said the drones will have all-terrain capability and can fly above an altitude of 500m, making them suitable for operations along the Indo-Pak border. The tender for the 67 rotary wing drones was floated in early April, 2022 and closed on May 2.

The Israeli drones are said to have cleared the aural signature, high temperature and damp tests. According to the contract, the drones will be manufactured in India. Rotary winged drones operate like helicopters, giving them vertical take-off, landing and hovering capabilities. The UAVs' normal cruise speed is 10 metres per second. However, its most crucial feature is the surveillance day and night camera, which has an operational endurance of "not less than 45 minutes" and can take photographs and record video clips at temperatures ranging between -5 degrees and 55 degrees Celsius. Besides, they can transmit videos in realtime. The cameras' 'target detection slant range' — the line of sight distance between the camera and the object — is a minimum of 2 km in day time and 1 km at night.

84 K'taka prisoners to walk free under spl remission

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

THE 75th anniversary of Indian Independence this year will see thousands of jail inmates walk to freedom on August 15. Karnataka too is doing its bit in joining the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' being celebrated by the Central government across the country. The state has nearly 100 prisons which include central, district, open and taluk-level jails where more than 15,000 inmates are housed.

Of them, around 10,000 inmates are undertrials. The state-level screening committee in home department decides on reducing prisoners' jail terms and recommends it to the state cabinet from where it goes to the Governor for final approval. In the first phase, the state prisons department has identified 84 inmates, not serving life imprisonment, who will be set free.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has directed all state governments to remit sentences of prisoners meeting certain criteria in their respective states. Speaking to The New Indian Express, Home Minister Araga Jnanendra said that the 84 inmates who have been identified including four women inmates, fall under the criteria set by the MHA. Of the 84, 81 inmates have completed two-thirds of their term. "We will finalise the names and the list within the next 15 days" he said.

These inmates will be released on August 15, 2022. In the second and the third phases, more prisoners will be released on January 26, 2023 and August 15, 2023. P4

India rejected Gota request for a safe getaway?

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

WITH the Sri Lankan Presidential Palace under occupation by angry protesters since Saturday, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had sought time till Wednesday (July 13) to resign. It now appears he may have set the timeline so as to plan his safe getaway by then.

Gotabaya is weighing all options for fleeing. Since he surrendered his American citizenship in 2019, finding a safe passage back to the US is proving to be difficult, though reports suggest he applied for a US visa recently.

CNN reported that he sought to take a flight to Dubai on Monday. But the immigration staff didn't facilitate his boarding through the 'silk route' — a fast track route for VIPs.

His brother Basil, too, attempted to flee to Washington via Dubai from Colombo through the silk route and had six boarding cards for an Emirates flight. The silk route has since been put on hold to prevent politicians from fleeing.

According to sources in Sri Lanka, Gotabaya even sought India's support in facilitating his exit. He was looking at taking a Sri Lankan Air Force AN 32 or a commercial flight to land into India.

"When India nipped their proposal to land on a Sri Lankan Air Force aircraft, another one was made through a commercial airline. The plan was to board a Sri Lankan Airways (UL-229 CMB-KWI) aircraft. After being airborne, this aircraft would be diverted in the garb of a 'technical stop' at Cochin airport, where Gotabaya and his entourage would be allowed to disembark and leave. Permission was needed from India as most members of his team did not have Indian visas. However, India refused to be part of the plan," said sources in Colombo.

It wasn't clear where Gotabaya was headed but the call sign of the aircraft he was planning to board (via a diversion in Cochin) was for a Colombo-Kuwait flight. For its part, the Ministry of External Affairs refused comment.

Meanwhile, a petition has been filed in the Sri Lankan Supreme Court seeking travel restrictions on the Rajapakas and other biggies to prevent them from leaving the country. P12

Gotabaya Rajapaksa

Jaishankar sidesteps

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar brushed aside questions on giving asylum to the Rajapaksa clan, saying India's focus right now is on Lanka's economic situation. "We are not involved in the other matters," he said

Bumrah sparkles in first ODI

In helpful conditions, the pacer ran through England's much-vaunted top-order on his way to a record-setting afternoon at The Oval

6/19 Jasprit Bumrah returned with the best bowling figures for an Indian against England in ODIs at the Oval on Tuesday

ZERO Four England batters were dismissed without scoring a run

114 Rohit Sharma (76) and Shikhar Dhawan (31) put on 114 -- their fourth century stand at The Oval -- as India chased 111 without losing a wicket | P15

Rain claims two lives in Haliyal; Bommai says no dearth of funds for relief works

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Karwar/Mysuru

HEAVY rainfall in Uttara Kannada district claimed two lives at Murukwada village in Haliyal taluk where a woman and her daughter died after a wall of their house collapsed on Tuesday morning. The deceased, Rukmini (37) and her daughter Sridevi (13), were sleeping near the wall when it collapsed on them.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) in Dandeli Ganesh, told TNIE, "It was a family of five members. The mother and daughter were sleeping near the wall and the son and father were in another corner. The mother-in-law was also sleeping at a distance when the incident occurred." This is the second incident in the taluk which has claimed human life. Last week, a 40-year-old man was washed away in a lake near Haliyal.

Meanwhile, CM Basavaraj Bommai, who is on a two-day visit to rain-affected districts, said in Mysuru there is no dearth of funds as the state government has Rs 750 crore under the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF). He also said the government will hold a meeting with officials on seeking funds from the Centre for rain-relief works. A report on loss of lives, landslides, damage to roads, collapse of houses and other rain-related incidents will be submitted to the Centre, he said. P5

Narayanpura dam filling fast, Vijayapura on alert

With Narayanpura reservoir receiving an inflow of 95,000 cusecs for the past 24 hours and over 1 lakh cusecs being discharged, flood alerts have been issued to all villages located downstream.

CM: Seismic experts to study landslides, quakes

Madikeri: CM Basavaraj Bommai on Tuesday said that teams of experts will visit Kodagu to conduct a seismic study in the wake of frequent landslides and earthquakes. P5

JAB-O-METER TAKE YOUR SHOT

July 11 **9,28,732 doses**
July 12 **9,77,227 doses**
TOTAL: 1,99,11,38,096

NATIONWIDE	JULY 11	JULY 12
Fresh cases	16,678	13,615
Recoveries	14,629	13,265
Deaths	26	20

KARNATAKA	JULY 11	JULY 12
Fresh cases	673	891
Recoveries	852	1,189
Deaths	1	1

EXPRESS READ

Koppal Toy Cluster begins operations

Bengaluru: The production process at India's first-of-its-kind toy manufacturing ecosystem, Koppal Toy Cluster, was set in motion with the first unit in the cluster beginning its operations on Tuesday. Four other units are likely to open by August. P4

Schools against imposing language

Bengaluru: The Associated Managements of Primary and Secondary Schools in Karnataka has submitted a memorandum to Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, objecting to the recommendations of the State in the NEP position paper on language education.

PREZ POLL

Mr Ballot Box is ready to fly, gets front seat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

IF you find a 'box' travelling on a passenger seat in your next air travel, don't be surprised. It could be 'Mr Ballot Box'. It's an actual ballot box, not a quirky traveller with a weird name!

The Election Commission has booked a 'Mr Ballot Box' in flights on Tuesday and Wednesday to send the vote container to different states for the July 18 Presidential polls. A separate air ticket is booked in the name of 'Mr ballot Box' as it travels on the front row of the aircraft. Seated alongside 'Mr Ballot Box' will be the assistant returning officers. The box travels under the personal supervision of the officer.

"The presidential elections involve a fascinating journey of the ballot box to states/Union territories and return after polling," said the poll panel.

According to officials, the EC had got this special right in 1969 from the civil aviation ministry for the ballot box and other election material to travel as a passenger.

After air travel, 'Mr ballot Box' will be stored in strong rooms under strict videography. After the poll is over, the polled and sealed 'Mr Ballot Box' and other election material will be transported back to the Office of Returning Officer Rajya Sabha Secretariat by the next available flight.

The boxes and other documents are carried personally in the aircraft cabins — never out of sight of accompanying officers, the Commission added.

An air ticket booked by the Election Commission for Mr Ballot Box | EXPRESS

Once they reach Delhi, officials are assisted at the help desk at the Delhi Airport, manned by the officials of the Election Commission of India, Civil Aviation, Delhi Police, and CISF.

MPs will cast their ballots in the Parliament House.

Poll panel takes stock

CEC Rajiv Kumar and EC Arun Chandra Pandey on Tuesday held a review meet with Returning Officer P C Mody on preparedness for presidential polls

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